plainly. The young man who desires to become engaged lives with his parents; the young girl lives with her mother. The fiancé buys the fiancée with a present /mpango, nsalamu/, which usually consists of copper or ivory bracelets /nsambo, makosa/, or beads /bulungu/. The parents tell the emissary that their son is already grownup and wishes to marry a certain girl. They explain to him that they have met /kuishibana/. The emissary rises and takes the presents to the young girl's parents; he explains the purpose of his coming. Then all the kinsmen of this clan /mukowa/ meet in the hut of the young girl's parents in order to give their opinion with regard to consent and in this manner to avoid any possible difficulties which might arise later /pa kuti babâfwe ko ukusumina uyu mwaume, bekaosa limbi, fikanasa nda fyaisa limbi abati: ifwe tatwali ko nga twalikene mwaume/. When everyone has agreed and consented to the engagement, they tell the emissary: "We agree, let the young man come here and be betrothed to our daughter" /Chisuma naese ope, natutemwa/. The emissary rises and returns to the young man's parents' home. He tells them what has been decided /abeda no mo ere umfwila mulandu/. The father and mother tell their son: "Go and get your tree-bark fabrics which you must offer as a present" /filundu/. 584

Filundu. The fiancé's father has previously manufactured two filundu (costumes of ficus bark). He gives them to the emissary to seal the engagement alliance. The latter places them in a basket, along with the beads and other presents, and returns to the parents of the fiancée. If everyone consents again, the engagement pact is concluded. The parents of the fiancée then take possession of the presents /kulya mpango/, the maternal uncle /malume/ takes possession of one of the two filundu, while the father takes the other costume. [562]

Engagement Banquet at the House of the Fiancé: /kutebeta/. The fiancé's parents try to obtain a chicken; they kill it. They then have plenty of flour ground. They prepare an enormous amount of mush /bwali/ and a big bowl of seasoning /munani/ with beans /chilemba/ and spinach /musali/. This is another occasion for offering presents /kushikula/: they place one bracelet on the bwali, another on /it/ the chicken, and the beads are placed in the pitcher which contains water for washing hands. As a mark of respect the food is always covered by a basket /balakupika po/. They also invite several kinswomen, who bring food in small covered baskets /tyakupikwa/. [563] [576]

Then the Shibukombe (emissary) is invited, whose job it is to uncover the covered baskets. In payment for his work he may take all the small presents placed on top of the food /ng tuntu toonse tulya bashikwile pa bwali, fyakwe/. 584

Period Between the Engagement and Nubility: /kukûba/. During the period preceeding nubility the fiancée often goes to her fiancé's hut in order to do small chores, such as sweeping, lighting the fire, drawing water or whitewashing the house. These chores are supposed to reveal to the fiancé the devotion and skill of his future wife /kuchichila/. Furthermore, she will live in her fiancé's house for a considerable time in order to show that she is docile /kupetama/. 583

When his fiancée is on the eve of menstruation, the fiancé goes to live with his father-in-law /shifyala/. He does several favors for him. As a token of respect, the food which is offered him is always covered by a basket. His bwali will be offered him uncovered only on the day when the Shibukombe is invited to uncover the wedding bwali, before which the latter will pour water for him to wash his hands /kusambikisha/, and after having whitened the spot where the fiancé washed his hands (nsoni shapwa) with clayey soil (kushingula). [576]

Chisungu (Menstruation). In the forest. When the fiancée has her first period, /kuwa chisungu/, she runs to hide in the forest. After finding her, her kinswomen collect around her in order to make certain of the fact /samukumba/. They then break small branches from the trees, and while dancing they sing as follows: "We have gone to tell the little spotted lion-cub that his master has come" /Twaire sobera nkalamo ya mabala chibinda taluba/. They then go to the fiancé's house, and place their branches on the roof saying: "Nshimba, nshimba" (wild cat). From this moment on, the fiancé takes the name of shichisungu, and the fiancée, nachisungu. 58

At home. Then the women go to find the nachisungu (the nubile fiancée) in the forest, and after having submitted her to various /213/ tests, such as jumping across a bundle of fire-wood or drinking water from a jug which contains small tadpoles, they carry her back to her home on their shoulders. The fiancée's father leaves his hut and goes to stay elsewhere. Henceforth there will be the mako [734]

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they only eat pumpkin leaves', i.e. where game is short and the people have to rely on vegetable relishes. They refer to a visit to a village on a big river as, 'He has gone to eat fish with So-and-So.' The fortunes of each district are discussed year by year and villages described as 'with hunger' (*pa nsala*) or the converse, 'with beer' (*pa bwalua*), i.e. with so much grain that they can make beer frequently. The seasonal changes in food, and the stages in its production, give their names to the periods of the year. While a definite calendar of moons exists (cf. Chap. XVIII) the Bemba more often time events as having taken place 'in the hunger months', i.e. the last months of the rains when the millet supply is low; or 'when we were eating mushrooms', 'when the *mupundu* fruit was ripe', and 'when we were reaping, sowing', &c., and the ages of babies are usually reckoned by dating their births in this manner.

The position of the Bemba traveller, dependent as he is on the hazards of hospitality, provides a further element of uncertainty. The correct greeting to one who has returned from a journey is *Mwalyeni bwino*, 'Have you eaten well?' To which the courteous reply is *Kulila mulelya*, 'Provided you have eaten well yourself', or *E Mukwai kufipwishya*, 'Yes, sir, I eat everything up completely', or else *Fia kwa cilime bafipwa kano wa kulapo panda*, 'It would have been impossible to finish up all the crops unless you had built a house alongside', i.e. it was so plentiful. There is a regular form of magic used to ensure a guest's arrival before a meal has been finished and not after. A knot tied in the grass with the right formula repeated will secure this result, and I found my staff even performed this rite on my own behalf if at all doubtful as to my reception on a visit to unknown English hosts.

Besides this direct interest in the food he is going to eat in the day, or the beer he may have the luck to come in time for, the secondary values acquired by food give it an added emotional interest to the Bemba. It must be remembered that there is no other way of accumulating wealth in this area except by acquiring sufficient food to feed many followers. The giving or receipt of food is a part of most economic transactions, and may come to represent a number of human relationships whether between different kinsmen or between subject and chief. For this reason the whole question of handling or dividing food acquires tremendous emotional significance for the native, and discussions of personalities or legal relationships tend to be ultimately expressed in this

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273 433 July or August—I should say that beer was brewed in most villages about once a week. In the subsequent months the supply would be less frequent, and during the scarce season at the end of the rains *ubwalwa* would only be found regularly at a chief's court. If asked how often a woman should brew a year, the answer was anything from four to six times, which, reckoning about 80 lb. of millet to one brew, would mean an annual expenditure of about 400 lb. of millet on beer.[1] Ten brews in one year was described to me as excessive, with the added criticism: 'That is a woman who likes beer.' But [438] there is no doubt that in villages near white settlements, people brew much more often than this because of the profits they hope to make from the sale, and they even buy grain for the purpose.[2]

273 574 ●576 On any one night, the amount drunk per head is limited by the rules of social etiquette. Under village conditions drinking follows a definite order of precedence. The guests usually arrive between four and five in the afternoon, after the day's work is done. They enter one by one shouting: '*Hodi*?—May I come in?' at the door and crouch on the newly cleaned floor side by side. Water is bubbling in a big pot over the fire in charge of the woman of the house, and the calabash, or sometimes more than one, stands ready on the floor, for water may not be poured on the drink (*ukubiko bwalwa*) until the honoured guests are assembled. The owner then rinses out his mouth with water and spits on the ground calling a blessing of the ancestral spirits (*ukupala mate*) for a peaceful beer-drink. He then hands round the drinking reed ceremoniously to the eldest man present, who sucks the first draught, pronounces on the quality of the beer, and hands the reed back to the host. Drinking then follows in order of age and status. The old men near the calabash talk and take long pulls at the *ubwalwa* in turn, while the elder women, if present, sit farther off, and rise occasionally to take a couple of drinks and then return to their place. Young

[1] Out of an annual production of roughly 2,400 lb. of grain per family (from U. Moffat's report to the Diet Committee of N. Rhodesia, 1933). It must be remembered, however, that the woman does not usually cook on the same day as she provides beer and that she is brewing for the whole village and not for her household alone.

[2] At Kasaka village during the months succeeding the harvest (1933) out of 11 women, 3 had brewed once; 2 twice; 2 three times, 2 four times, 1 five times, and 1 six times. In the figures collected by Mrs. Gore-Browne 15 villages had brewed on an average 10 times each in 6 months from June to January, using 9,400 lb. of millet, but figures are difficult to verify and the prohibition on the sale of beer makes women reluctant to tell the truth on this point.

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men come up to the pot later and kneel to take a short draught, usually in silence. Boys might be invited to take a drink as a joke by one of their elders, but they would never stay in the hut all the evening. Young girls chiefly drink at special women's beer-drinks, but on a general occasion they sometimes sit outside in groups of four or five and dare each other to go in to the drinking hut, with much giggling and jokes. I never saw them stay more than about a quarter of an hour. But all such additions to the circle take place later in the evening when the beer is already weak. It is clear in fact that with the formality practised under village conditions, the bulk of the three or four calabashes brewed at one go (*amatimba*) is distributed through the whole community but that the elder men and women have the largest proportion of this supply, the young men a smaller share, and the young women and boys an occasional drink in between dancing. Thus it might be estimated that the average consumption on any one night would be somewhere near 1½ pints per head for an older man or woman, 1 pint for a younger, and about ½ for a young girl.

Under modern conditions these rules of etiquette are often broken. There is apparently little obligation to share beer that is bought with money, and even when the owner has brewed her own supply there is a tendency for it to be shared with four or five people only, or even for it to be drunk alone. In such cases natives will start drinking in the morning and sit at it all day. The formalities of polite invitation and the order of drinking all go by the board, and in the circle of villages round a town like Kasama it would be fair to say that a large proportion of the younger men are regularly drunk every Saturday and Sunday in a way that is quite unlike the slight intoxication of an ordinary village beer-drink. On the other hand, in one or two modern communities, i.e. those on the grounds of some of the protestant missions or in the near neighbourhood, a large percentage of teetotallers is common, since the pledge is taken by many church members. But at present no other substitute form of entertainment seems to have been discovered for the Bemba, since tea is a prohibitive price in this area and the various non-alcoholic drinks made of millet, such as have been issued from time to time by different mining companies, are not commonly made. The drinking of beer, therefore, besides providing a valuable addition to a poor diet, continues to be essential to a normal existence in this tribe.

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free to eat the foods she has cooked for him.[1] After a period varying anything from five to fifteen years he is ceremoniously admitted to his wife's family (*ukumuingishya*) 'to make him enter in', and after this feast and dance the keeping of the in-law taboos is at an end. This rite takes place when the marriage appears absolutely stable and two or more children have been born, and the ceremony is no mere picturesque survival at the present day. The early years of Bemba marriage are a genuine period of trial, and fathers-in-law do not hesitate to refuse to admit their daughter's husbands into their family if the latter have not won their full approval. I heard of a case in which a man performed the *ukuingishya* ceremony for his youngest son-in-law after a period of two years, because he was a steady, likeable fellow, but postponed the rite for ten in the case of his eldest daughter's husband who was less dependable. It is only when husbands are scarce, under modern conditions of absentee labour, that fathers are afraid to exert their jurisdiction over their sons-in-law in the traditional way.

The Symbolism of Cooked Food.

The feeding of the *shifyala* is not only one of the economic obligations of the marriage contract, but part of the complicated pattern of etiquette prescribed between the bridegroom and his wife's family. It is, in fact, one of those instances in which the giving and receiving of cooked food has become symbolic of the legal or economic relationship which entails it. It is particularly important to notice that the preparation of porridge and relish is the woman's most usual way of expressing the correct kinship sentiment towards her different male relatives, for this actually affects the distribution of food in the community. The case of the son-in-law is characteristic.

The Bemba custom of sending food to the son-in-law, *ukutebeta shifyala*, with all the ceremonial that surrounds it, is one of the essential elements of the prescribed etiquette between the wife's family and that of the husband. The young son-in-law may be an outsider and a nobody in some respects, but he must be treated

[1] The full series of ceremonies are rarely performed nowadays, but the son-in-law will probably be made ritually free of one or two of the chief foods. Compare the observance of the *Hlonipa* customs of avoidance by the Zulu bride, coming to live in her husband's village according to the principles of patrilocal marriage, and the ceremonial by which she is gradually made free to drink the milk in the kraal of her relatives by marriage.

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with the right courtesies. He must have that due so precious to the Bemba, and so constantly the subject of discussion—*mucinshi*—which might be translated respect, courtesy, or recognition of one's rightful status.

The first dish of porridge sent to the young bridegroom is considered an interesting and exciting event even in present circumstances, when much of the ritual surrounding it has been dropped. A little girl of 12, betrothed for the first time, explained to me with shining eyes what would happen when her 16-year-old bridegroom came to take up his residence in her village that night. 'We shall make him porridge,' she said in delighted tones, 'we shall send it to him where he sits in the men's shelter. He has become our child, i.e. a member of our family, or a dependent of ours' (*Asanguka mwana uesu*). Women like to speak of the food they cook for their daughter's husbands. To provide big dishes of porridge and occasional gourds of beer for her *shifyala* is a wealthy woman's pride, and she will take great care to serve and cover the food baskets in the correct way (*ukupikula*). In fact, the Bemba, who delight in the ceremonious carrying-out of obligations, like to make a parade of this custom of feeding the son-in-law, particularly to a stranger. A native sitting in my tent would often turn and look through the open door and point out with a pleased expression the small boys with baskets of porridge on their heads who were walking off to the men's shelter, and exclaim with satisfaction at the sight. A typical comment would be, 'Look! They are carrying food to the sons-in-law! It is *mucinshi!* That is our custom; and in the old days it was just the same.' It is not uncommon for women to deny themselves food rather than let their daughter's husband go short. In the hunger months I saw a more or less starving old woman near Kasama prepare her last dish of food for her son-in-law, who was himself a well-paid young teacher at the Government school. She went without herself. 'It is what is due to the son-in-law' (*ukucindika shifyala*), she said shortly when I expressed surprise.

The young husbands themselves are, of course, equally insistent that they should be treated with the right etiquette. If the wife's family is short of food, or of labour to cook it, on any occasion, there is no cause for complaint. But if it is once suspected that the mother-in-law is merely being stingy, then the insult is felt to be grave. It is a sufficient cause for the break-up of the marriage.

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I met two attractive sisters left unmarried long after the usual time and asked the reason. I was told, 'Their husbands come and live here a short time, and then they go. They say, "The mother is mean. She stints us of porridge. She gives us no respect." ' In the same way I have heard young men discussing the pros and cons of cross-cousin marriage and concluding, 'Cross-cousin marriage is not so good. Our aunts (*banyina senge*) do not give us as much respect as other women would. They do not send us food every day or cover the dishes elegantly.'

The importance of the offering of food to the son-in-law continues long after the wife has become an independent householder, cooking on her own. His mother-in-law continues to send him dishes. In fact, the offering of food by the woman to the man is one of the essential obligations of kinship and other social ties. It is part of the legal duty of a wife to cook porridge for her husband and to allow him a predominant share of it, and hence it becomes a privilege and a matter of pride. I noticed that young girls, recently betrothed, would intimate this fact by saying shyly: 'I have begun to cook for him.' Older married women will beg, borrow, or work for food to supply their husbands if their own granary is empty. Each wife in a polygamous household will cook for her husband even if she has insufficient for herself, so that a husband may get two or three dishes of porridge while a wife and her children may go short. I saw a second wife, whose garden had been destroyed by locusts, live with her three children for two days entirely on mushrooms, while the last remnants of her millet were ground up daily to provide a diminutive dish of porridge for her husband, the latter amply supplied by his more fortunate headwife, who had so much surplus millet that she sat at the other end of the village brewing beer with it. To my question as to why the second wife did not keep her grain for herself and her children and leave the first to supply the husband, the reply was immediate: 'Because she hates her fellow wife.' The rivalry natural between co-wives was expressed in the competition over the provision of food. The Bemba woman's prestige largely rests on her power to provide porridge and relish for her male relatives and to serve it nicely. These are the dues a man expects from his mother-in-law, his wife, and a number of other women in his kinship group.

It is the *umucinshi*[1] that matters to both parties, as well as the filling of the belly. Hence the women in a village do not attempt

[1] [i.e., custom. – Analyst]

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owner may be the only person able to reap the grain and store it, but he may have to give portions of the crop to others on demand.

The granary itself is individually owned. In fact, it is considered unpardonable even to look into another man's *butala*, and children are taught not to play under the eaves of neighbours' granaries or to peer at the outside too closely. 'You children, you! You stare at the granary of another! That is bad what you do. (*Cabipa.*) Clear out now!' I heard an old grandmother shout on one such occasion.[1] There is no efficient way of closing the opening to a granary, and the stores are often left unguarded hours at a time while their owners are away in their gardens. But the tradition of respect of a neighbour's *butala* is so strong that thefts appear to be very uncommon, and these mud cylinders are the most private hiding-places a man or woman has. Treasured possessions, magic horns, money, or beer may all be concealed safely in a granary, and though the *ubutala* is apparently protected with special charms sometimes, I think these are designed to circumvent sorcerers, who are believed to steal crops by magic means (cf. p. 189), rather than ordinary thieves. The use of padlocks and keys, much affected by sophisticated people near white towns, is not likely to be as effective as the traditional tribal belief in the inviolability of the granary.

The right of disposal of the millet store is determined by a complicated adjustment of the claims of the man and his relatives and those of the woman. The millet garden is commonly spoken of as belonging to the man,[2] because it is he who originally cleared the ground for it. But a married man is described as making a garden for his wife. He may make a separate field of his own as does a chief,[3] but his wife's *cĭtemene* is his first charge, and a polygamist must clear a millet patch for each wife and build each a granary. This duty is stressed at the wedding ceremony, when the

[1] When measuring the contents of granaries I found the owners sometimes reluctant to allow me inside. In any case other women always fell back and left me and the owner alone.

[2] Cullen Gouldsbury, 'Notes on the Customary Law of the Awemba', *Journal of the African Society*, vol. xv, Jan. 1916, p. 158, emphasizes the man's ownership of the food as against the woman's.

[3] Called an *umulasa* garden in imitation of the chief's garden made by tribute labour and belonging exclusively to him, as distinct from his wives. With the prevailing shortage of labour, husbands are rarely able to make two gardens, one for themselves and one for their wives. I only saw three described as *ayo umulasa* in 1933–4.

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853 demand, and conversely, his circle of close kinsfolk are those who never deny his requests for food. The Bemba mother suckles her baby whenever he crys, and as he grows older she never says 'No' as long as there is anything in the house which he can eat. To refuse to feed a child who is hungry is one of the worst possible crimes and the words 'To refuse porridge' (*ukutano bwali*) are usually uttered with a special note of disapproval in the voice. [538] Folk-tales describe with moral indignation the behaviour of the woman who denies a hungry child, and the infant is early aware of his rights with respect to food. Even babies are touchy in this matter and always on the look-out for offence. I have heard children of 8 or 10 burst out on to the veranda of a mother's or a grandmother's hut sobbing in a most heartfelt way: 'They have refused me porridge' (*bantano bwali*). Examination might prove that the child had merely had a slightly smaller portion of porridge than its fellow, but it felt the insult deeply apparently. I have seen an older girl flounce out of the house of an aunt using the same words, 'They have refused me porridge', when she had merely not been invited sufficiently heartily to join the evening meal. In the hunger season this phrase *bantano bwali* is constantly on fretful children's lips.

But this expectation of food is limited to a definite circle of relatives. Those households which the child describes as 'at our place' (*kumiesu*), i.e. chiefly those of his mother, her sisters, and his grandmother, are early distinguished, and I have often watched toddlers, starting on a slow and arduous progress from hut to hut, wherever they might expect to find dainties and knew they could take them without rebuke. Within this circle of relatives the child early realizes that he is only getting what is his due. The European •576 child brought up in the individual family expects to be fed by one or two people only, and knows that the others who entertain him are doing so by way of exception out of kindness. He is constantly taught to express gratitude to such individuals and this training begins so early that in most European languages there is some monosyllable such as 'ta' which the baby is taught to use when it cannot pronounce the more formal 'thank you' properly. The Bemba child on the other hand is at home in a far bigger circle of relatives and takes their help for granted. From any member of this wider ring of kinsmen he can count on support as his due. One native explained when I asked why a certain young man had

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received a present from his relatives without saying thank you: 'He doesn't thank because they are his own people. If it had been an outsider, he would have said: "Thank you, Sir", because it would have been from pity they gave to him. To one's own people one does not thank, not at all! You say that is good. That is all.'[1] Hence perhaps the widespread complaint of the European that the Bemba is ungrateful and that there is no proper term for 'Thank you' in his language. Also perhaps the frequent disappointment of the white man who has given some unusually valuable Christmas present to his servant only to find that the gift is often taken for granted as part of 'the latter's regular perquisites'.

From these facts it will be easy to see how the association between authority and the power to give, on which the political life of the tribe depends, is impressed in concrete fashion on the mind of the smallest child. But food is also something that has to be shared, and in this attitude the Bemba baby is definitely trained even in the first year. Children share from one dish and the mother or elder sister tears off for each a lump of porridge with a little drop of relish rolled inside. An unexpected present or find must be divided with any other babies sitting near. Any European food, such as an orange or a bit of bread, that I might happen to give away was torn into the tiniest fragments, and mothers who are such lax disciplinarians in other respects, speak quite sharply to their children on this one issue. I have seen a woman seize a lump of pumpkin out of a baby's hand and say in most vehement protest: 'You give some to your friend you child, you! You sit and eat alone! That is bad what you do.'

As the Bemba child grows older there is a third attitude he has to acquire, i.e. that food is something over which his older brothers and sisters have definite rights—not elders generally, but the seniors of his own family group. He is taught that they may pounce on any delicacy he may be eating. This I first noticed among groups of children in one village, mostly parties of brothers, sisters, and cross-cousins. An older boy would take without comment any orange or biscuit I might have given to a younger child. All boys between 10 and 15 regularly wait for the leavings of the young men's meals, and have no other portion allotted to them. I have

[1] *Taiota pantu ni mwana uabo. Nga ni umbi, aleti 'Ea Mukwai' pantu ni ku luse bamupela. Ku bantu babo teti atote nakarya! Ukuti asose 'Cawama', epela!*

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576 867 even seen a grown-up man seize a piece of fish from a small sister of 8, who expressed absolutely no surprise. An older girl will catch the wrist of a younger sister who has been given some snuff and scrape the precious powder out of the young girl's hand, leaving her only a little pinch for herself. The younger sister may make a face, but will not protest. In the same way I have seen a young husband call to his wife to throw him a lemon she had been given. She exclaimed: 'You crocodile you!' but threw him the fruit quite good-naturedly. Hence the rights of the elder or the headman or the Chief described in Chap. XIII, are based on beliefs very early inculcated, of what are a relative's dues. Here again the different attitude of European mothers is noticeable. In a society in which individual initiative is on the whole encouraged, and age has no particular prerogatives, we tend to see that the youngest child gets his fair share at the dinner table or in the nursery and often teach the elder children to 'Give it to Baby first'. The Bemba mother on the contrary always says: 'Let your elder brother (*umukalamba wobe*) have it! Give it to him first', and on this recognition of precedence the whole organization of daily life as well as the political system finally depends. Bemba children in fact do not seem to resent the rights of their elders, and I noticed that both little girls and boys often repeated the words *umukalamba uandi* ('my elder') in tones of great affection and pride. The con-
593 stant competition between the older and younger members of the family that is so pronounced in our society does not seem to exist.[1] We encourage our children to take a pride in their personal possessions, to handle them carefully, look after them, 'put them
[524] away'. Bemba children have no material possessions beyond the twig bow or the maize cob doll, but all the objects they use they are taught to yield up on demand from an elder. In adult life the
[431] man who gives presents to his elder brother, and still more the woman who honours her elder sister, is praised with particular enthusiasm.[2]

[1] Bemba brothers are not in competition with each other for the family inheritance as among the patrilineal cattle-owning people of South Africa. There is little material property to inherit, and in any case the boys marry early in life and hence join different economic and local groups.

[2] When I travelled with my older sister for some weeks in this area I noticed that whenever I carried something for her or gave her precedence, a delighted murmur went up from the watching women: 'She honours her *umukalamba*. Look, she is carrying it for the big one.' It meant conformance to their own code.

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262 and during the recent locust scourge the villagers whose gardens escaped destruction complained that they were not really better off than their fellows for 'our people come and live with us or beg us for baskets of millet'. But within small limits there is a difference between one housewife and another in her successful management of her grain bin. For one thing, as has been described, she generally cooks roughly the same amount of food however many visitors arrive. The careful housewife also restricts her brewing of beer to necessary occasions, i.e. for a ceremony or a working party, unless she has plenty of millet. Further, there are certain 574 traditionally accepted ways by which she can avoid her tribal obligations. Within limits she can conceal her supplies. The [881] young girls at their initiation ceremonies are in fact taught to hide a little food for their husbands at night, 'to give him the thing which is put by in the dark at night', and I have often seen women take a pot of beer and conceal it in a friend's granary on the reported arrival of some elderly relative. To refuse hospitality with a pot of beer sitting on the hearth would be an impossible insult, but a bland assertion that 'Alas, Sir, we poor wretches (*ifwe balanda*)! We have not a thing to eat here' is sometimes necessary. This would not be done in the case of a near relative, but only with a more distant kinsman of a classificatory type, or one of the well-known 'cadgers' of the family.

576 Bemba etiquette is also on the side of the housewife, since children are taught from their earliest years never to ask for food except in a near relative's hut, and not to look around a hut or into a granary. In fact, one definition of a witch or a wizard (*umuloshi*) is a person who comes and sits in your house and says, 'I expect you are going to cook soon. What a fine lot of meat you have to-day', or 'I expect the beer will be ready this afternoon', or some such remark. The girl at an initiation ceremony I witnessed was [881 taught to sing a gesture song about a tortoise: -538]

Fulwe pa fyakwe
Aingishyo mukoshi
Mu ci fwambaka;

i.e. 'The tortoise in his own house puts in his neck under his shell' of which the moral is said to be: 'Don't be like the tortoise which shrinks its head into its shell when it is at home, but when it is abroad, (i.e. in somebody else's house) puts its head out and asks for things or peers around.'

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cultivators. The site of the village itself is also believed to provide a very rich soil, because 'many things have lain and rotted there' and because of 'the many footsteps of people passing'.

Most natives will add that human excrement makes soil rich. A specially fine crop of cassava has been explained to me as due to the excrement of children. But here there is a certain amount of contradiction. No Bemba will admit that an adult could ever defaecate on a village bed. This would be strictly counter to etiquette, among a people who have a horror of touching night-soil. Only small children would commit such a breach of good manners, it is maintained, in spite of ocular evidence that the rule is sometimes broken. Hence a native will admit that the fertility of an old village site is partly due to human manure which gives it *umufundo*, but will scold children for using the *mputa* for such purposes. At Canda we Eiya an enraged woman even threatened to call down a curse (*ukulapishya*) on the children who had evidently defaecated on her garden beds. She screamed out, 'You children, you! You go on defaecating on my cassava, you! You make us eat excrement. That is not a good thing, no! I am really going to put a curse on you this time.' It is not surprising, therefore, that in the few places where cattle are kept, the natives object strongly to the idea of using kraal manure.

House sites themselves (*ifitantala*) become a heap of rubble and decaying sticks after the hut walls have been demolished, and a season's rain has fallen on the ruins. After a year, or perhaps two, the raised mound on which the house stood formerly is soft enough to plant. The Bemba sow maize on it or tobacco plants. Whether the surface soil has a high percentage of lime from the plaster walls, or is merely rich in nitrogenous matter from the hut refuse, it is clear to the naked eye that maize flourishes on these *ifitantala*. At Kungu village in April 1934, the plants grown on the deserted house sites were 3 feet higher than those planted elsewhere. This frequent use of the soil of village sites is an important point. Most Europeans in the district look forward to the day when the Bemba will build permanent houses and adopt fixed cultivation. There would be obvious advantages in such a course from many points of view, but on this poor soil, in the absence of cattle manure, the practice of shifting huts, while continuing to use the deserted site, gives the Bemba the richest soil they have for certain crops, such as maize and the various cucurbits.

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The girls kneeling in an attitude of humility

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585 burning log out of his hut to the crowd of waiting relatives outside. This is proof of his virility: the women shrill their plaudits and the men shout. The bride is given her marriage pot at dawn by her father's sister, and then follows the presentation of the bride and bridegroom to the community. Later comes the setting up of the fire-place for the girl and still later, perhaps after a year or two, the giving to the son-in-law of his granary and his garden.

421 The form of social structure I have described exists in a culture in which there is no permanent form of property, such as land or cattle, which could bind the members of a kinship group together or link one generation with the next. Consequently, social relations in Bemba society consist very largely of the giving and receiving of services.

556 622 606 604 Wealth consists of the power to command service such as a chief calls for from his subjects, a headman from his villagers, a father-in-law from his son-in-law, or a mother's brother from his maternal nephews. Service could also be demanded in the old days from surrounding tribes which were raided for slaves.

556 Service makes it possible for a man to put big fields under cultivation, to build a big granary and hence to be able to feed more workers in another year.

622 Service was given to the chief in return for food provided at the capital and also the supernatural powers on which the people believed they depended. Service was given to the headmen from some of these motives also, but the headman was also usually a relative and he received these dues in his capacity as head of a kinship group. Those not so closely related he had to attract by a nice mixture of authority and the formal expression of courtesy.

576 622 In such a society the ceremonial expression of respect by kneeling to a superior, clapping hands before him, offering him food in a specially formal fashion, or even rolling on the back is characteristic. Men should creep into the presence of their chief, throw themselves over on their backs and roll from side to side clapping their hands; the abject humility of the gesture is striking to the European observer. In such circumstances it will be readily understood that the father-in-law attracts his son-in-law not only by the economic support he provides but by much formal giving of food

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for which the women in the household are almost entirely respon- 606
sible. The son-in-law in his turn behaves respectfully towards the elder members of his wife's family. The tensions which I have described as inherent in a matrilocal marriage system of this kind make these presentations very significant in maintaining a family and village structure which, as I have explained, is one of rather precarious balance.

Accepted sex roles. Social structure, as I have used the term here, 554
consists of a series of social roles which are associated with membership of the different social groups of which the tribe is composed, or with different status positions in it or with formalized relationships, such as that of subject to chief. In the present connection the roles which are of special interest are those based on sex and age and the social behaviour expected of husband and wife.

The ideal of a Bemba in the old days was military success and with it the exaction of tribute and slaves from conquered peoples. This is arrogantly expressed in the phrase 'We Bemba cultivate with the spear and not the hoe'. Patient industry in agriculture was not as much admired as the power to command service from others. The ability to attract followers by generosity, the elegant exchange of courtesies, and by personal popularity was highly rated. The organizing powers and judgement which are essential to the achievement of either of these aims are admired in themselves.

Thrift and the slow accumulation of property are not admired 556
since they cannot be achieved in terms of Bemba economy. Children are brought up to share everything they have with the group they are with and easy and even reckless giving is praised. Bemba also admire display of all kinds, but here, as may be imagined, the display is not so much of personal possession but of followers and adherents, who walk about with a man of note and praise him.

Bemba admire ceremonious behaviour in personal relations, 576
exact forms of address, the recognition of social precedence and rights to respect, and the avoidance of quarrels, unpleasantness and 'scenes' which might disturb the delicate balance of village relations. They praise suavity and self-control in personal relations. They delight in circumlocutions and allusive speech, and seem [195]
sophisticated in social contacts, as compared with their neighbours, the Bisa.

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576 Bemba ideal behaviour is that of the *mwina umusumba* or man living at the court, as distinct from the *mwina impanga* or inhabitant of the bush; the country bumpkin.

577 A commoner is expected to be loyal to the death to his chief,
565 and to accept the fact that his rulers have the right to all his time and all his possessions. He must be silent and respectful. Members of the crocodile clan are expected to be arrogant and even ruthless, but they must be generous in feeding their adherents.

888 Extreme deference is paid to age. Each child knows his exact
561 position of seniority in a group of village children and is given precedence in games. Each group of men sitting in the village shelter does the same. A younger child is scolded for putting itself forward before its elders.

562 Bemba women share many of these ideals. They work for their
622 chief in his gardens and make the same abject obeisance to him. They have a lively interest in the ritual centred in the court. They play an important part in attracting followers and kinsmen to a village. A headman's following or 'crowd' (*bumba*) is attracted by means of beer, good entertainment and company, and these depend both on the successful organization of labour, which is largely a man's job, and on the wise and tactful distribution of food, and happy personal relations, which are mainly in the women's sphere.

562 Women, unlike men, are admired for industry and for resource
842 in finding food in the bush. They are honoured for bearing and
888 rearing many children and for courage in childbirth which is often, under Bemba conditions, a terrible ordeal. They are expected to be loyal to their own sex and to accept the domination of older women.

562 In the sphere of tribal life women have an important part to
644 play, or rather one that is thought to be important. As we saw,
622 two senior princesses have districts of their own; and junior princesses often act as village 'headmen'. In all these cases they wield political authority but are regarded as chiefs with feminine attributes, that is to say, with more gentleness and hospitality to the needy. They are not expected to be ruthless in discipline. They have male counsellors to advise and support them. Besides these real political functions the senior women have important ritual duties since, like their 'brothers', they are in charge of

The Cultural Setting

562 often becomes imperious and managing and obviously enjoys her position as she sits on the verandah of a large hut, directing operations and dividing food. This is the position a woman achieves by a stable marriage, and one which she longs to achieve.

833 Sex relations are openly desired by Bemba and celibacy for men or women is not admired. A girl who rejects men is criticized as having 'pride of the womb' (*cilumba ca munda*). Abstinence is only practised for ritual reasons, by a woman nursing a child, for instance. Adultery in women was, however, savagely punished in
837 the old days and is a cause of divorce. It is still thought to cause death in childbirth. Men are not very seriously criticized for adultery although it is thought a terrible crime for them to 'kill' their children by not submitting to the purification rites.

462 The two sexes are divided in everyday life as regards their work
264 and recreations. Men sit in their own shelter at night and eat together there. Women, on the other hand, are grouped round their own house verandahs. Men have their own economic tasks and
593 women theirs. Girls do not enter marriage with any ideal of companionship with their husband. A young couple is not expected to show affection in public and a bridegroom tends to be despised for spending time with his wife. But affection grows over the years in the case of a stable marriage.

593 There are certain obvious contradictions in the husband's
562 position. Menfolk are dominant in Bemba society. Women used to
●[576] greet men kneeling, and they still do so on formal occasions today. Men receive the best of the food and take precedence at beer drinks and on other social occasions. They speak first in family matters. Men are expected to take the initiative in sex affairs. Women are married (*ukwupwa*—the passive form) while men marry (*ukwupa*—the active form). Girls are taught to please their husbands and are considered responsible for giving them pleasure in sex relations. Women calmly accept the fact that their husbands will beat them 'when they are young and their hearts get hot quickly'.

593 The contradiction between the masterful male and the sub-
562 missive son-in-law, between the secure young married woman backed by her own relatives and the submissive kneeling wife, is one which first struck me forcibly in the course of the chisungu

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881 554 443 743 present, but *banacimbusa* are rather wealthier than their fellows owing to the payments they receive, and they carry themselves with considerable dignity and circumstance.

[408] The *nacimbusa* stands in a special relationship to the girl she has initiated throughout her life. She will probably deliver the girl's first child and act as *mbeusa*, or special guardian, to the baby.

881 202 576 *The messenger.* In the old days when the exchange of feasts formed a more important part of the ceremony than they do now, the *nacimbusa* was assisted by a woman known as the *nakalimbe*, who was employed to invite the guests to the ceremony by rolling on the ground in front of their houses—the Bemba form of obeisance to a chief. They also fetched clay for the pottery and supervised the ritual cooking of the food.

881 584 *The candidates and their bridegrooms.* The initiation candidate is known as the *nacisungu*. As I have said, these girls were usually betrothed before the ceremony, but it was possible to carry out rites in the case of a girl who was not yet affianced. The bridegroom of a betrothed girl takes part in certain of the ceremonies under the title of *shibwinga*, and this term is also extended to the sister or cross-cousin who may replace him in certain parts of the ceremony.

881 593 604 *The relatives.* Other relatives include the girl's parents and her father's sister. The girl's mother is responsible for providing food and beer, and her father's sister is believed to have a special influence over the fertility of her paternal niece and to stand in a special relationship to her. But the ring of relatives is comparatively small. The uxorilocal family is the chief unit involved.

881 533 *The character of the rite.* The chisungu is a popular ceremony involving much dancing and singing. There is a special drum-beat characteristic of chisungu ceremonies which is frequently used at ordinary beer feasts and always used throughout the rite. Drums are beaten inside the initiation hut, and on the dancing space outside, but they are also carried wherever the women go, some miles out into the bush and back again. The singing is accompanied, as always among the Bemba, by the beat of the drums and by the clapping of hands. Some songs are peculiar to the ceremony and are necessary parts of the rite, but some can be sung at other times. All the chisungu dances are of a characteristic type. They

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are solo performances with a definitely dramatic character, and are not round dances of the kind usually seen on the village ground of an evening.

Dancing among the Bemba is done for amusement, but it may be also done 'for respect'. Commoners will dance for their chief: a young man will dance for an older woman or man; a senior man may dance for a senior woman of his wife's family. In such dances of respect it is common for the soloist to dance in front of the person he wants to honour, and to sing definitely to him or her. It is particularly respectful to dance with vitality and dash. I have frequently heard headmen rebuking a crowd of bedraggled young women brought out to dance for me in the rain. The phrase was always the same: 'Rejoice, can't you? Do you want people to think we have no respect? Go on, there! Try to rejoice.' In the chisungu ceremony this type of dance of respect is as important a way of carrying out obligations as the provision of food and beer. It is no mere accident that the chisungu is described as 'dancing the girl'.

The mimes representing domestic and agricultural life are usually more serious performances. They sometimes involve real play-acting and the exact imitation of the animal or the behaviour of the person concerned. In most cases, however, what I have described as mimes are formalized representations of an action, such as pounding grain or sowing seeds, and they tend to resemble the rather stereotyped movements of a kindergarten singing game in this country.

The term 'sacred emblem' is used throughout this account. I have selected this word to translate a Bemba word, *mbusa*, which means 'things handed down'. The *mbusa* are of various types, but they may all be considered as secret in the sense that they either have a secret name or a secret meaning. They are of three types. The first of these are the pottery emblems. These are a series of models of common objects made of fired clay, usually painted with white, black and red. Some of them represent domestic objects (a water pot, a hoe or a pipe), some animals or birds (a crocodile or an egret), some are fertility symbols, and some represent historical characters. Many of them are realistically modelled and easily recognizable, while others are conventional pot designs each with a name. A certain number of designs are common over the whole

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roughly tied, and they were made to crawl a few yards in this position. Then the branches were pulled off again and piled into a heap about two feet high. The girls were told to jump over it. Both scuttled across the open space like frightened rabbits to the accompaniment of screams of encouragement and threats from all around. ('Don't tremble!' 'Don't be frightened, you silly girls.' 'Jump now! Jump high.') The girls were evidently nervous to a degree, and one failed to manage the moderate jump expected and had to try again and again. When both the girls were over, there was an outburst of congratulation. Nangoshye rubbed red cam wood (*ukula*) on the faces and shoulders of all the older women present and on me as the giver of the chisungu. This red powder used to be rubbed on returning warriors and men who had passed successfully through the poison ordeal; and it is still daubed on lion-killers.

Nangoshye picked up her paternal niece and carried her across her back, and the other girl was shouldered by her own father's sister. The two old women led the procession back to the village carrying the girls shoulder high as chiefs or brides are carried as a sign of honour.

> '*We have dragged a heavy stone down from the hills*
> *We have brought it in.*'
> '*The skin of the leopard which makes you cry,*
> *We have dragged it and dragged it;*
> *We have brought it in.*' (No. 8.)

('The chisungu has fallen off.' 'Yes like a stone.' 'The red powder is the blood.')[1]

Arriving at the village, we crowded into the chisungu hut again. The girl helpers picked up the big drums and the characteristic chisungu rhythm rang out. As the initiation candidates were hustled into the hut, the women broke into another song calling on the people to look at what had been brought in. (No. 4) 'I have

[1] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation.* The heavy stone is the weight of the chisungu. (A.C.). It means the difficulty and hardship she will have to go through before reaching maturity. They have passed through danger. Therefore they are marked with red powder like the lion-killers. The leopard skin makes the girls cry. (The leopard skin was worn by *banacimbusa* in old days and therefore represents authority.) The leopard signifies the hardship the girls will have to face.

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been given to my lion husband. Come and look! Come everyone and look! We are taking them to where they were left at the *mukolobondo* tree."[1]

The rite ended with a ceremonial obeisance by the three senior *banacimbusa*. The three wrinkled old women rolled flat on their backs in the centre of the hut in the salute usually given to a chief. A definite episode seemed to have ended.

('They did it for respect, (*mucinsh*)—to give honour, (*ukucindika*)'.)

Some of the visiting women broke away from the crowd at the door of the hut and rushed into the open. They began to vie with other women in solo dances. The performance went on far into the night. Beer was being served in front of the huge fire in the centre of the hut and the dancing went on in the moonlight outside.

The teasing of the girls (*ukubacushya*)

At about nine in the evening, Nangoshye suddenly shouted out, 'Now let's start to tease the girls.' She and her helpers pushed into the hut and picked up the two girls by their arms and legs and swung them to and fro in front of the fire singing (No. 5):

> '*Let us shake her, shake her,*
> *The enemy has made himself hard.*'[2]

('It is just done to give them knowledge of the world.')

SECOND DAY

The next day passed without special rites. The *banacisungu* were sent out of the village to visit relatives elsewhere. The beer was exhausted, but dancing sprung up in the evening at about five o'clock outside the chisungu hut and went on until half-past ten at night. A number of visitors had already assembled from other villages, and this seemed to stimulate further solo dances. Most of these dances were of the play-acting type. They represented little

[1] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation.* We are bringing the girls to the place of life, i.e. the *mukolobondo* tree. The girl is given to her husband who is strong as a lion. She calls on the women to see what kind of man her husband is. (A.C.).

[2] A reference to the women's punishment of the girls for the faults of their youth.

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scenes of everyday life, extravagantly burlesqued and done with great character and abandon. Some of the dances belonged specifically to the chisungu ceremonies and were done to the chisungu rhythm, but others were dances that might be done at any beer drink of a rather formal character.

Most of the dances were comic. For instance, two or three women did dances imitating the hop of a frog to an accompanying song by the whole company. One gave a rendering of a woman gathering potatoes, and another of a woman grinding maize. Then a young man suddenly leaped into the centre with a light springing step from side to side. He snatched up a maize cob from the floor and tied it on his back to represent a baby, amid roars of laughter from the clapping crowd. A woman got up to join him and they threw the baby from one to the other in a way that was evidently considered comic in the extreme. The dance was described as 'just dancing', (*ukucindafye*). Then came a special chisungu dance. A young man who was not only the brother of the affianced bridegroom, but the son of a *nacimbusa*, sprang into the middle of the circle to do a typical dance of respect. He danced to each of the older women in order of seniority, calling them out to dance opposite him and singing one of the songs of respect that belong to such occasions. (No. 6.) He evidently knew the etiquette, and was determined to make the party go with a swing. He was described as 'a very respectful young man', (*wa mucinshi*).

Other dances of respect followed. Men of the girl's family did solo dances in honour of the women of the bridegroom's family. The younger women saluted the older *banacimbusa* in this way. One or two of the dances were modern, imitating the drill of the local Protestant Mission school.

THIRD DAY—SIXTH DAY

The making of the small pottery emblems

The third day opened with the carrying of a small pot of beer to Nangoshye and her helpers. It was presented by the mother of the bridegroom as part of her required payments.

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[881] The maize cob was then tied with special creepers to a branch of the tree, and Nangoshye and the two elder women dodged to get it into their mouths. Then a girl climbed up and tied the maize cob to a high bough. The *banacisungu* had to try to climb up, leg first. They were finally helped on to the bough by the younger helpers.

('The girls are to imitate monkeys because the monkeys eat everything on the trees.' 'The monkey is always stealing. A good wife must try to find food for her family whenever she can. This song is to make the girls imitate the monkey.')[1]

'*The monkey eats everything that bears freely*
That is why he climbs the mukolobondo tree.' (*No.* 11)

'*The monkey calls its mother.*' (*No.* 12)

The honouring of the muruku tree

[824] The next rite was the blessing of the *muruku* tree which is one of the symbols of womanhood in this tribe. It was described as '*ukusapila mbusa*'. Two small rings of white beads were tied round twigs of the tree and the girls were made to bite them off in their mouths and give them to Nangoshye. Having taken the decorated twigs in her mouth, she began to jog up and down and to offer them in her mouth to the elder *banacimbusa* in order of seniority. Each one went down on her knees and reached out both hands to take the twigs covered with the saliva of the woman who offered them. As each woman took the emblem she made the *ulla ulla* [576] sound of general congratulation.

[824] ('The girls are to get firewood always now.' 'It is to honour the *muruku* tree. If we did not do this there would be no parenthood for the girls.' 'Why?' 'Because the *muruku* is a tree that bears much fruit.' 'This is called "the blessing of the child's *mbusa* with spittle".' (*ukupalila imbusa shya umwana*).

Then came the first singing of the song, 'The arm-pit can never be higher than the shoulder' (No. 13) which was repeated so often during the subsequent rites. The song appears to represent the

[1] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation* (A.C.). 'The monkey steals. It is to frighten the girl from stealing. Hunger forces one to do the unusual, i.e. climb a tree upside down. It brings trouble.'

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little darting water insects known as *njelela*. The dancing and the drumming started up and Nangoshye alternately jogged up and down on bent knees and tried to catch the little insects in her mouth. It seemed an almost impossible task and she failed, after many efforts, and much encouragement. Then the two girls themselves set to work, this time with unwonted animation. Both succeeded in catching an *njelela* and spitting it into the hands of Nangoshye to the sound of much clapping and ululation.

This rite which was carried out with all the laughter and excitement of a game of snap-dragon at an English Christmas party was evidently considered of some importance. It seemed to be a test of the maturity of the girls in the sense of their acquisition of that important social attribute of every Bemba—*mano*, or social sense.

('They try to find out if the girls have grown up (*nga nabakula*).' 'If the girl doesn't catch the *njelela* the women all know "She has not yet acquired *mano*", and the mother has to pay a forfeit.')

The girls made free to offer food

Two large winnowing baskets were then brought in and filled with ground nuts, peas and beans. One had a small basin with a collection of miscellaneous objects in it—a bracelet, a maize cob, some salt, some snuff, etc. These again were described as *mbusa*. Both of the baskets were covered with lids as food is covered when it is carried as a token of respect. There followed more offerings of respect to the *nacimbusa*. Drums and singing went on incessantly, the company jogging up and down with bent knees as before and a younger woman uncovering the basket with her mouth, picking up seeds in her mouth and dropping them into Nangoshye's hands. They sang, among other songs (No. 17):

> '*You have uncovered it.*
> *You have eaten the whole nsomo.*'[1]

The *mbusa* were looked for, found, picked up with the mouth again and handed to and fro. Again came the song of the arm-pit not being higher than the shoulder. All this was described as, 'It is a way of honouring the senior people' (*ukucindika abakalamba*).

[1] A.C. comments: the *nsomo* was the bridegroom's gift. It tells the girl: 'You have uncovered it. This is your life. You have to look after others in need.'

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881 778 535 balls of porridge filled with the domestic emblems. The two girls were stood against the wall under their own wall marks. Paternal relatives stood one on each side of them and passed the balls with the hidden emblems from side to side across them. This was to make them free to eat all the foods. It was, in other words, the removal of the girls' food taboos.

The company burst into song which goes with the representation of the washing of the husband's hands, (see page 202) and the girls' hands were washed. The paternal aunt danced out in front and kept pretending to show the hidden *mbusa* to the girls and fighting with Nangoshye who pretended reluctance to let them be seen.

881 The endless giving and taking came suddenly to an end in one of those dramatic moments that move even the weariest onlooker. The women broke into a song of unusual melody (No. 41):

Cibale! Cibale!
Come and wash your husband!
You ignorant creature,
Go and draw water,
Cibale! Cibale!

881 535 576 A younger *nacimbusa*, dancing with great vitality and charm, bent as though to pour water on the hands of every woman present in order of the assembled hierarchy. She pretended to whitewash the floor beneath each and bowed low to clap obeisance.

The company were roused to excitement immediately. To my questions they whispered: 'That is respect!' 'That is how the woman honours her husband. That is how he knows she has been taught. If a woman does not know how to wash her husband's hands, he will say, "That is not a woman. She is like someone who hasn't been danced!" ' (*Canakashi! Cabanga bashicindile!*)

881 The tension seemed to break. The ceremony was over. The porridge was divided up in a business-like way and each family took its portion. There was scrapping about the size of the bowls and a general return to normal life.

881 535 In the late afternoon, dancing began again and at night the teasing of the girls went on once more. One girl cried at once and

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was applauded. The other girl was throughout more stocky and reserved. A woman said to me: 'Well, we can't give her up. We must go on and on trying to teach her.'

TWELFTH DAY

This was a blank day. Nangoshye declared herself insulted and went off to reap her own fields. She had plenty to eat, as was clear to anyone sitting in a tent near her hut; but the relatives did not bring her enough 'dishes of respect'. 'They neglect me,' she went off grumbling.[1]

In the evening the pottery emblems were piled with branches, scattered with leaves of the magic *mufungu* tree, and fired.

THIRTEENTH DAY

This was another quiet day. In the morning, Nangoshye and her helpers went to inspect the pile of pottery emblems still covered with smouldering ashes.

The snake

In the afternoon a new pottery figure was made in the hut. It was an immense snake (*yongolo*). The clay was smoothed into coils that circled round the floor of the hut with a tail on the fire-stands against one wall and a head rearing up the opposite wall. Again the work was heavy and lasted two or three hours. There was the puddling of the clay outside the hut, the fetching of gourd and bean seeds and the meticulous arrangement of seeds along every coil of the snake's body. There was the same concentrated air about the women and the sense of a fight against time, but the same unwillingness to shorten the work at all.

(The women were reluctant to speak of the meaning of this emblem. 'It's just a snake' several said impatiently. Another added, 'It is to teach her not to deceive her husband.' On question, Nangoshye looked down with great embarrassment and said, 'Yes, it is a sign of manhood.'[2]

[1] "*Bansula*". *Ukusula* is to despise, neglect, or fail to acknowledge a person's rights.

[2] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation.* P. B. M. commented afterwards that it was not an ordinary snake. It was a *yongolo*, a very rare snake. It was to teach the girl that unexpected things might happen. She must support them all patiently.

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The Ceremony

The bathing of the girls

The two girls were then taken down to the river to be ceremonially bathed—another rite which follows most Bemba ceremonies. A little beer must still have been hidden away in the village for some of the older women seemed happily drunk. They did intoxicated solo dances in the mud on the water's edge singing:

'*We have gone to fill the pot.*'

They put grass bracelets round the girls' arms saying that they were an earnest of the many things their husbands would give them later.

NINETEENTH DAY

At about five next morning, I was woken by soft clapping outside my tent. I lifted the flap and there knelt the *banacisungu*, washed and shaved and with shining new white handkerchiefs on their heads. They were still in the humble, submissive attitude with eyes on the ground but they answered me quickly with the shy smiles and the little courtesies expected of polite young Bemba girls, their faces for the first time alive and responsive. In fact, the phrase 'rite of transition' began to have a new meaning for me when I remembered the dirty frightened exhausted creatures who had been badgered and pushed through the chisungu weeks, and compared them with these demure and shy young brides. They begged for little presents. Later I watched them kneel and clap obeisance outside each hut in the village. 'They are submitting themselves to the elders' was Nangoshye's proud comment. 'They show they are willing to work for us.'

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

The congratulations (*ukushikula*)

Just as Bemba rites of transition are followed by the *kulishya* or the giving of the freedom to eat, so they are also usually followed by the *ukushikula* or presentation to the community. The chisungu candidate, the bride after her wedding ceremony, and the chief or headman who has succeeded to a new title are all submitted to the same rite. The person who has changed his status is brought out of his hut and placed on a new mat outside its door. He is bathed,

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

881 oiled, usually shaved and dressed in new clothes and he sits in
576 silence in front of the villagers. These come up in order of
431 seniority and throw small presents on the mat and scold the person who has reached the new status for any faults he has been guilty of in his previous state. This is the *ukushikula*.

On this occasion each of the newly initiated girls sat on a mat with a real or potential husband at their sides. Their kinsmen came up shouting home truths at them as they dropped small bracelets or coins in a basket at their feet. The offerings were then gathered up by Nangoshye and distributed among her helpers. The chisungu rite was at an end.

The wedding ceremony

881 The wedding ceremony should have followed closely on the
585 chisungu rite. It consists of the carrying of the bride to her husband's house, the consummation of the marriage when the bridegroom throws a burning faggot out of the door of the hut; and the
576 ritual inauguration of the marriage pot of the young pair. There is
431 a further *ukushikula* when the father of the girl gives the young bridegroom an arrow with which to protect her honour. The wedding ceremony was not performed for either of these two girls. One was not betrothed and the bridegroom of the other was at the mines.

881 CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT CHISUNGU PERFORMED AT CHINSALI, NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA, IN 1931

1*st Day* *Entry into the hut* (*Ukuingishya*)
The blessing of the girls.
The hiding of the girls (*ukusakila*).
The first jump.
The first triumphant return to the village.
The teasing of the girls.

7*th Day* *The first woodland ceremony.*
The gardening mimes.
Honouring the *musuku* tree.
Preparation of the emblem bundles.